AWARD NUMBER: W81XWH-14-1-0362

TITLE: HomeFront Strong (HFS): Building Resiliency in Military Families

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CONTRACTING ORGANIZATION: Regents of the University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

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13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT

Military families have long been the pillars of strength, yet the tempo of deployment over the past 14 years has taken a toll. Nearly 40% of military spouses experience psychological symptoms related to deployment, yet few evidence-based programs are available to support spouses. The current project aims to improve the psychological health of military families residing in civilian communities by implementing and evaluating HomeFront Strong (HFS), a promising evidence-based psychological health intervention for military spouses/partners.   This project is guided by three goals: 1. Develop and field test an HFS mobile website; 2. Train community providers to disseminate HomeFront Strong at their community sites (8 sites); and 3. Evaluate the mental health outcomes of Group vs. Web-based HFS in a sample of 360 military spouses/partners. In the current funding period, the HFS mobile website and administrative console have been developed, designed, and field tested (Goal 1, complete). Foundational activities for Goal 2 and 3 have occurred, with a confirmed partnership with Easter Seals Michigan to disseminate HFS at four sites, final product development of community training materials, a comprehensive plan for participant recruitment, and IRB proposals are in process.   The subsequent year will see concerted effort in each of these areas.

15. SUBJECT TERMS

Military spouses; Resilience; Psychology health intervention; Mental health

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Table of Contents

1. **INTRODUCTION:**
   This project aims to improve the psychological health and well-being of military families residing in civilian communities by disseminating and evaluating HomeFront Strong (HFS), an evidence-based resiliency intervention for military spouses/partners. The project is guided by three objectives: 1) Develop and field test an HFS mobile website; 2) Train community providers to disseminate HomeFront Strong at their community sites; 3) Evaluate the mental health outcomes of Group vs. Web-based HFS in a sample of 360 military spouses/partners. The current proposal will build capacity in local communities to offer HFS, provide program evaluation data to further establish the effectiveness of HFS, and generate feasibility data to develop a strategic plan for large scale implementation of HFS.

2. **KEYWORDS:**
   Military families; Military spouses; Military partners; Resiliency; Mental health; Psychological health intervention; Community capacity building; Dissemination; Implementation science

3. **ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

   What were the major goals of the project?
   1) Develop and field test an HFS mobile website
   2) Train community providers to disseminate HFS at their community sites (8 sites projected) and evaluate levels of training (Basic versus Enhanced)
   3) Evaluate outcomes of Group vs. Web-based HFS in a sample of 360 military spouses/partners

   What was accomplished under these goals?

   Goal 1: Develop and field test a HomeFront Strong mobile website:

   i)   <u>Major activities</u>
   In collaboration with the Center for Health Communications Research at University of Michigan, Goal 1 has been a primary focus of this funding period and has been successfully completed, resulting in two products: 1) the HFS Administrative Console and 2) the HFS mobile website.

   Access to the secured website will be managed through the HFS Administrative Console. The HFS Administrative Console is available only to HFS program staff and is a tool to support program management and implementation. The Administrative Console has been designed so that HFS program staff can manage participant enrollment in HFS either as individuals (Web-Based Condition) or as part of a cohort (HFS Group Condition).   Depending on the enrollment status of a participant, the Console is programmed so that participants receive timed access to each of the eight on-line sessions, with session and homework reminders pushed by email or text, at the participant's preference.   See Appendix A for images from the Administrative Console.

   The HFS mobile website is designed to be accessible to participants from mobile devices or computers, and is hosted on a secure server with password protection. The site includes content for each of the eight HFS sessions, with interactive exercises, audio files, and homework practice

embedded throughout. The site will be the sole source of program information for participants in the Web-based Condition and will provide supplemental learning opportunities for participants in the HFS Group Condition. Of note, for participants in the Web-based Condition, the website does not include some of the more interactive elements that are used as discussion points in the group setting (e.g., guided journaling, tracking self-care, daily gratitude with test reminders). The Web-based condition also is information only, meaning there is no opportunity for social connection with other military spouses/partners. See Appendix B for images from the HFS website.

Programming language has been written to collect participant usage of the website via paradata approaches, including "clicks" on each page within each session, length of time on each page, homework completion, and access of audio files.   These variables will allow us to define use of the site and dose of exposure to the content material. See Appendix C for a sample image of paradata to be collected.

ii)   Specific objectives
Consistent with the proposed Statement of Work for this Goal, the following objectives have been met in Year 1:
- Design, programming, and pilot testing of the HFS Administrative Console to manage secure access to the website and delivery of program information via the site
- Modification of HFS program materials and content for delivery via mobile website, including eight sessions of psychoeducational content and interactive exercises, homework tracking logs, and audio files
- Graphic design and software programming of the HFS mobile website
- Beta testing of the HFS mobile website with key stakeholders
- Programming to collect paradata (participant usage of the site, time spent per page, completion of session activities, etc.)

iii)   Significant results or key outcomes
The HFS Administrative Console and HFS mobile website are complete and ready for program use. Beta testing of the Administration Console by HFS staff and non-participating stakeholders has been completed. Programming language to collect paradata regarding site usage has also been completed.

iv)   Other achievements
Nothing to report.

v)   Stated goals not met
All goals related to the HFS mobile website have been met. As participants enroll in HFS and real-time usage of the site and Administrative Console occurs, we will make necessary programming changes or updates.

Goal 2: Train community providers to disseminate HomeFront Strong at their community sites (8 sites projected):

i)   Major activities

For Goal 2, the primary activities have centered on final preparation of HFS community provider training materials, including a training protocol for community providers, HFS curriculum manual for the providers, and training slides for the 2-day community training. The training has been piloted through Star Behavioral Health Providers under a different grant mechanism, and with some modifications is ready for launch with this project.

This project uniquely focuses on training of community providers and seeks to evaluate the dissemination and implementation process of HFS. As such, another major activity has been finalizing the evaluation protocol that will be used to assess fidelity to the treatment model and the community providers' overall experience in implementing HFS. Lengthy discussions with the University of Michigan Institutional Review Board have been held, and a Not Regulated proposal for this portion of the project is under review.

In this funding period, we have also focused on engaging community partners to launch HFS groups at their community sites. We expect to engage a minimum of 8 community sites through the course of the project. Easter Seals Michigan has 13 community locations state-wide, and has committed to participating with at least 4 sites. A Memorandum of Understanding is under review. Individual and small group meetings have also taken place with other community agencies interested in disseminating HFS. Additionally, meetings have been held with the Michigan National Guard to identify specific geographical areas of need, and with Star Behavioral Health Providers Michigan to plan locations for community trainings.

ii)   Specific objectives

Consistent with the proposed Statement of Work for this Goal, the following objectives have been initiated in Year 1, with ongoing effort projected for Year 2:

• Engage community partners (8 sites proposed)
    o Easter Seals Michigan has committed to 4 community sites, and is completing the MOU process
    o Informational meetings have occurred with other potential community sites and state partners
• HFS community provider training
    o HFS training protocol is finalized
    o HFS curriculum manual is finalized and is in graphic design
    o HFS training slides have been piloted and are under modification
• Evaluation of the HFS implementation process with community providers
    o IRB is under review at University of Michigan as Exempt category
    o Final measures for evaluating the HFS implementation have been selected
    o Qualtrics programming of the evaluation measures is in process

iii)   Significant results or key outcomes

A key result for this outcome is the commitment from Easter Seals Michigan to participate as a lead community agency, offering 4 sites spread geographically across the state. Other key outcomes include the near finalization of the portfolio of training products. Year 2 will see significant advancement in this Goal with key outcomes in the training domain.

iv)   Other achievements
Nothing to report

v)   Stated goals not met
Given the revision of the timeline to prioritize Goal 1 (HFS mobile website development; See Question #5), the activities toward Goal 2 are reasonable and within expected parameters.

Goal 3: Evaluate Group vs. Web-based HFS in a sample of 360 military spouses/partners:

i)   Major activities
For Goal 3, activities in this funding period have centered on further strengthening partner relationships and exploring strategies for future participant recruitment. Our team has met with the Michigan National Guard, Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency, Star Behavioral Health Providers – Michigan, Easter Seals Michigan, Ann Arbor VA, and Blue Star Families to discuss strategies for recruitment. We have also initiated community mapping exercises for cities identified as locations for future groups. Additionally, we have explored targeted social media advertising.

In this funding period, we have finalized the evaluation protocol to use for participants at the four assessment time points (pre, post, 3-month, and 6-month follow-up), and are in the midst of the IRB process at the University of Michigan. Additionally, Qualtrics programming of the participant surveys is in process.

ii)   Specific objectives
Consistent with the proposed Statement of Work for this Goal, foundational work for the following objectives has been initiated in Year 1,with substantial effort projected for Year 2:
   • Participant recruitment plan
       o A recruiting plan has been detailed based on community site locations, with plans for social media advertising and leveraged advertising from key partners
   • Multi-wave program evaluation with HFS participants
       o IRB proposal at the University of Michigan for human subjects is in process.
       o The qualitative interview and evaluation measures for each of the four assessment waves have been finalized
       o Qualtrics programming of the survey measure is in progress

iii)   Significant results or key outcomes
Nothing to report

iv)   Other achievements
Nothing to report

v)   Stated goals not met
Given the revision of the timeline to prioritize Goal 1 (HFS mobile website development; See Question #5), the activities toward Goal 3 are reasonable and within expected parameters.

What opportunities for training and professional development has the project provided?
Training for community providers (Goal 2) will be a primary focus in Year 2 of the project.

In Year 1, professional development activities for our team have included:
- Star Behavioral Health Providers Tier 1, Military Culture
- Star Behavioral Health Providers Tier 2, Psychological Concerns in Military Populations
- Star Behavioral Health Providers Tier 3, Military Family Resilience
- Ann Arbor VA Community Summit
- Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation Annual Grantee Summit
- 2015 Hidden Heroes Coalition Summit: Progress and Promise Produced Focused Initiatives and Overwhelming Support for Military and Veteran Caregivers
- Elizabeth Dole Foundation, Meeting of the National Coalition for Military and Veteran Caregivers

How were the results disseminated to communities of interest?
As Year 1 has focused on development of the HFS mobile website and logistics, there have not been any data-specific results to disseminate. We have presented the background and goals for this project in several professional venues (see Presentations, Question #6). We have also initiated a series of informational meetings with state partners to announce the upcoming community training and HFS program initiatives. These partners include, Michigan National Guard, Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency, Star Behavioral Health Providers – Michigan, Easter Seals Michigan, Ann Arbor VA, and Blue Star Families.

What do you plan to do during the next reporting period to accomplish the goals?

Goal 1: Develop and field test HomeFront Strong mobile website
The primary activities of Goal 1 were completed in Year 1. Consistent with the Statement of Work, Year 2 will include two objectives and related activities:
1. Launch the HFS mobile website with HFS participants
    - Monitor site for any implementation issues not evident in production or field testing
    - Modify site content or software programming as needed
2. Collect and analyze site usage data
    - Retrieve usage data from the secured site at timed intervals related to the cohort or individual's completion of the program
    - Write syntax to code paradata (e.g., how many clicks or time on page translates to session completion) and transform to SPSS variables of usage.

Goal 2: Train community providers to disseminate HomeFront Strong at their community sites
Consistent with the Statement of Work, the next funding period will focus on three objectives towards meeting Goal 2, with the following activities:
1. Engage community partners
    - Obtain final IRB approval from the University of Michigan and Human Research Protection Office
    - Finalize MOU with Easter Seals Michigan
    - Recruit and secure MOU's with 4 additional community sites

2. HFS community provider training
   - Train community providers at the 4 identified Easter Seals Michigan sites
   - Train community providers at 4 additional community sites
   - Randomly assign community sites to implementation condition: Basic (training + coaching) or Enhanced (training + coaching + co-led groups)
   - As groups launch, provide ongoing weekly coaching sessions to community providers
   - For community providers in the Enhanced condition, co-lead the HFS groups
3. Evaluation of the implementation process
   - Program Qualtrics for on-line administration of the implementation and fidelity survey for community providers
   - Field Qualtrics surveys to community providers during the course of each group
   - Conduct preliminary analyses of survey results
   - Conduct fidelity coding of the video-recordings from HFS sessions

Goal 3: Evaluate outcomes of Group vs. Web-based HFS in a sample of 360 military spouses/partners

Consistent with the Statement of Work, the next funding period will focus on four objectives towards meeting Goal 3, with the following activities:

1. Recruit participants
   - Obtain final IRB approvals from the University of Michigan and Human Research Protection Office
   - Recruitment efforts to target social media advertising, community mapping, and leveraging of existing partnerships.
   - Screen interested participants and offer HFS group or Web-based condition.
2. Conduct pre-, post-, 3- and 6-month follow-up assessments with participants
   - Conduct qualitative interviews with HFS participants at pre and 3-month follow-up assessments
   - Transcribe and code qualitative interviews with participants
   - Program Qualtrics with survey measures for HFS participants
   - Field Qualtrics survey to participants at 4 intervals
   - Conduct preliminary analyses of survey results
3. Offer HFS groups at community sites
   - Use the HFS Administrative Console to track and manage HFS program participation
   - Coordinate all logistics of the HFS groups (e.g., scheduling, location, food, supplies, children's program)
4. Offer HFS Web-based condition via HFS mobile website
   - Use the HFS administrative Console to track and manage HFS program participation

4. **IMPACT:**

What was the impact on the development of the principal discipline(s) of the project?
The HFS mobile website and Administrative Console have the potential to significantly impact the well-being of military spouses/partners who before could not participate in an in-person program because of geographic location, transportation issues, or other time commitments. The website includes all components of the HFS program, delivered on-line, through a secure, password protected site that is easily accessible via mobile/smart phone platforms. Military spouses/partners who previously would have struggled to attend an in-person program will now have the opportunity to receive the same evidence-based materials in an on-line format.

What was the impact on other disciplines?
Nothing to report

What was the impact on technology transfer?
Nothing to report.

What was the impact on society beyond science and technology?
Nothing to report.

5. **CHANGES/PROBLEMS:**

Changes in approach and reasons for change
The following has previously been discussed in Quarterly Reports.
In the initial grant proposal for this project, the HFS mobile website (Goal 1) was intended as a supplemental option for HFS participants to have greater access to program materials. During the initial award period, the Peer Review Panel provided feedback recommending inclusion of a comparison condition for HFS. This feedback resulted in a significant design modification to a quasi-experimental study comparing 1) HFS group participation to 2) a Web-based version of HFS delivered via the mobile website. This strengthened the overall design of the study and will allow more meaningful interpretation of the impact of HFS. However, this modification meant that the HFS mobile website had to be operational prior to initiation of any other project (e.g., participants could not be enrolled in HFS if both Web-based and Group conditions weren't viable; providers should receive HFS training near to the time of launching their first HFS group to avoid loss of knowledge). Thus, the overall timeline was modified to prioritize the development of the mobile website.

Actual or anticipated problems or delays and actions or plans to resolve them
Development of the HFS mobile website was delayed for several months after receipt of funding because our collaborating team at the Center for Health Communications Research needed to clear staff effort for the project. CHCR staff salary effort on the project was delayed accordingly. In Quarter 2 of funding, CHCR staff launched a sprinting development for the website, and as projected, we have completed the site in this funding year.

Changes that had a significant impact on expenditures

Because of the change in timeline and prioritizing Goal 1 (HFS mobile website development), the bulk of activities for Goal 2 (Training community providers) and Goal 3 (Enrolling participants into HFS Group/Web-based conditions) have been adjusted to launch in Year 2. Accordingly, we have delayed the hiring of staff critical for Goals 2 and 3 and have preserved a significant portion of the overall budget.

Significant changes in use or care of human subjects, vertebrate animals, biohazards, and/or select agents
Nothing to report

Significant changes in use or care of human subjects
Nothing to report

Significant changes in use or care of vertebrate animals.
Nothing to report

Significant changes in use of biohazards and/or select agents
Nothing to report

6. **PRODUCTS:**

Publications, conference papers, and presentations
As this year has focused primarily on development of the mobile website and project logistics, there have been no publications or presentations from data generated under this award. However, there have been two publications this year on HFS that are highly relevant to the project and contribute to the foundational support of this intervention. There have also been several presentations outlining the theoretical model of HFS and the study design of this project.

Journal publications
Kees, M. & Rosenblum, K. (2015). Evaluation of a psychological health and resilience intervention for military spouses: A pilot study. *Psychological Services, 12*(3), 222-230. doi: 10.1037/ser0000035.

Kees, M. Nerenberg, L, Bachrach, J., & Somers, L. (2015). Changing the personal narrative: A pilot study of a resiliency intervention for military spouses. *Contemporary Family Therapy, 37*(3), 221-231. doi: 10.1007/s10591-015-9336-8.

Presentations
Kees, M. (2014). *Promoting resilience in military families*. Keynote speaker, Pennsylvania State, BaseTrack Community Forum. University Park, PA.

Kees, M. (2014-15). Tier 3: Military Family Resilience. Star Behavioral Health Providers – Michigan. Mount Clemens, MI; Ann Arbor, MI; Pontiac, MI; Taylor MI.

Kees, M. (2015). Veteran Family Resilience. Ann Arbor VA. Ann Arbor, MI.

Kees, M. (2015). *HomeFront Strong: Building resilient families.* Invited webinar for the Department of Defense Office of Reintegration Programs.

Website(s) or other Internet site(s)
As described, the HFS mobile website and the HFS Administrative Console (Goal 1) have been completed during this funding period. To access the development portal of the website , please use the following website address, with the provided username and password. Please note that this is the development site, with sample and nonsensical answers on some pages. Screenshots of the HFS Administrative Console are available in Appendix A, and screenshots of the HFS website are available in Appendix B.

 https://kees.miserver.it.umich.edu/main
 username: test@example.com
 password: test

Technologies or techniques
Nothing to report

Inventions, patent applications, and/or licenses
Nothing to report.

Other Products
Nothing to report.

7. **PARTICIPANTS & OTHER COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS**

What individuals have worked on the project?

Name:	Michelle Kees, PhD
Project Role:	Principal Investigator
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID):	None
Nearest person month worked:	3.14 CM
Contribution to Project:	Dr. Kees is responsible for implementing all aspects of the project. She is the lead author on the HFS program materials, including the curriculum, participant workbook, training materials, and program content for the mobile website.
Funding Support:	No other support

Name:	Margy Howes
Project Role:	Project Administrator
Researcher Identifier (e.g.	Not applicable

ORCID ID):	
Nearest person month worked:	1.6 CM
Contribution to Project:	Ms. Howes is responsible for providing administrative support to the HFS team.
Funding Support:	No other support

Name:	Anne Hathaway
Project Role:	Financial Coordinator
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID):	Not applicable
Nearest person month worked:	1.7 CM
Contribution to Project:	Ms. Hathaway is responsible for all accounting activities and maintaining compliance with budgetary requirements.
Funding Support:	No other support

Name:	Chrysta Meadowbrooke
Project Role:	Research Evaluator
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID):	Not applicable
Nearest person month worked:	1.5 cm
Contribution to Project:	Ms. Meadowbrook has contributed to the methodological design and the IRB proposal. She is also setting up the Qualtrics database for both the provider and participant surveys.
Funding Support:	No other support

Name:	Emma Steppe
Project Role:	Project Manager (CHCR)
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID):	Not applicable
Nearest person month	2.37 CM

worked:	
Contribution to Project:	At CHCR, Ms. Steppe has directed the technical implementation activities of the HFS mobile website and the administrative console.
Funding Support:	No other support

Name:	Diane Egleston
Project Role:	Behavioral Scientist (CHCR)
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID):	Not applicable
Nearest person month worked:	3.2 CM
Contribution to Project:	At CHCR, Ms. Egleston has contributed to modifying the HFS program content for mobile website delivery.
Funding Support:	No other support

Name:	Andrea van den Bruelle
Project Role:	Creative Design (CHCR)
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID):	Not applicable
Nearest person month worked:	4.2 CM
Contribution to Project:	At CHCR,Ms. Van den Bruelle has provided the artistic direction for the HFS mobile site, including the design, creation, layout, compositing, and production of graphical and media elements.
Funding Support:	Nothing to report

Name:	Hsueh-Ling (Shelly) Chang
Project Role:	Software and Technology (CHCR)
Researcher Identifier (e.g. ORCID ID):	Not applicable
Nearest person month worked:	4.33 CM

Contribution to Project:	At CHCR, Ms. Chang has provided technical engineering, programming, and production services for the HFS mobile website.
Funding Support:	No other support

Has there been a change in the active other support of the PD/PI(s) or senior/key personnel since the last reporting period?
Nothing to report.

What other organizations were involved as partners?
Nothing to report.

8. **SPECIAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**
Nothing to report

9. **APPENDICES**
    A. HFS Administrative Console screen shots
    B. HFS Mobile website screen shots
    C. Paradata sample files

A. HFS Administrative Console screen shots

Assignment to HFS Group or Web-based Condition

When a new participant enrolls in HFS, the following information will be completed on the Administrative Console, and the participant will select either the Group or Web-based (Home) Condition.

HFS: Tracking HFS Condition

All enrolled participants can be tracked by Condition (Web-based/Home vs. Group) and enrollment date.

HFS Group: Establishing a Cohort.

When a new group starts, the "Cohort" will be defined in the Administrative console, based on the name of the group (Name of City, 1), and then the dates will be entered for each scheduled group. Participants will then receive reminder texts/emails weekly to let them know when the session content is available. HFS program staff will be able to override the date in the Administrative Console if a group session is cancelled or postponed for some reason.

https://kees.miserver.it.umich.edu/console/createCohort/

New Cohort

This cohort will send messagse at the times noted below. All times are scheduled in US Eastern Time (EST/EDT).

Cohort Name

Start Date of Session 1

Start Date of Session 2

Start Date of Session 3

Start Date of Session 4

Start Date of Session 5

Start Date of Session 6

Start Date of Session 7

Start Date of Session 8

Submit

HFS Groups: Monitoring cohorts

Through this function on the Administrative Console, each of the group cohorts can be viewed and tracked, which will be helpful for program management and planning assessments.

HFS Web-based/Home Condition: Monitoring participants

Through this function, on the Administrative Console, participants in the Web-based/Home Condition can be viewed and tracked, which will be helpful for program management and planning assessments.

B. HFS Mobile Website screen shots
   Below are screen shots from the HFS mobile website.

HomeFront Strong Welcome

HomeFront Strong Program Overview

HomeFront STRONG
Building Resilient Military Families

- HomeFront Strong
- Welcome
- Program Overview
- Session 1: Foster Resilience
- Session 2: Manage Stress
- Session 3: Cultivate Optimism
- Session 4: Rethink Thinking 1
- Session 5: Rethink Thinking 2
- Session 6: Build Community
- Session 7: Allow Emotions
- Session 8: Stay Strong
- Track Your Practice: Gratitude
- Resources
- About HomeFront Strong

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Program Overview

The core of HomeFront Strong is the House you see above. Each topic in the House represents strategies you will learn more about in HomeFront Strong, including:

Manage Stress

- How does stress work?
- What are your personal red flags for feeling stressed?
- Learn techniques to manage stress.

Cultivate Optimism

- How we think matters! What are you thinking?
- What positive coping strategies work for you?
- Practice gratitude, optimism, and realism.

Rethink Thinking

- What thoughts are you thinking?
- How can you swap negative thoughts?
- Learn the 3 D's to take control of thinking. Dispute, Discover, Distract.

Build Community

- What kind of friends do you want and need in your life?
- What are your expectations of others?
- Learn how to build a strong social support network.

Allow Emotions

- What experiences are positive for you?
- How can you be in the moment?
- Explore new strategies for coping with uncomfortable feelings.

- How can you be in the moment?
- Explore new strategies for coping with uncomfortable feelings.

Practice Grounding

The pillar of the house is **Grounding Strategies**. Each session includes a self-care activity that teaches you how to center yourself in the moment:

- Optimism
- Breathing
- Affirmations and Mantras
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Visualization
- Guided Imagery
- Mindfulness

Foster Resilience

All of the modules, put together, will **Foster Resilience.**

- What does resilience mean to you?
- What are your barriers to resilience? How can you overcome them?
- The story you tell yourself matters: what is your story as a veteran partner?

Let's get started with our first session, **Foster Resilience.**

« Back   Next »

Session 1: Foster Resilience

HomeFront STRONG
Building Resilient Military Families

- HomeFront Strong
- Session 1: Foster Resilience

FOSTER RESILIENCE

- FIB 1: As a veteran partner... ✎
- The Power of Gratitude
- Grounding Strategy: Gratitude
- Track Your Practice: Gratitude ✎

- Session 2: Manage Stress
- Session 3: Cultivate Optimism
- Session 4: Rethink Thinking 1
- Session 5: Rethink Thinking 2
- Session 6: Build Community

Session 1: Foster Resilience

Resilient people tend to do better during stressful situations. They bounce back quicker and have fewer negative effects from stress. They are also less likely to develop post-traumatic stress, depression, or other anxiety disorders.

Here are some ways to increase resilience:

- **Practice self-care.** Try to find time each day to prioritize yourself, whether it is 5 minutes of alone time or an hour reading a book.
- **Healthy body.** Set a goal to get enough sleep, eat healthier, and be physically active.
- **Focus on the good.** Find something each day that you are grateful for. Resilient people usually see challenges as temporary and try to learn from them.
- **Draw from your own previous experiences.** Think about specific times when you overcame a challenge. Use past successes to improve your confidence and your problem solving skills.
- **Ask for help.** It's important to have good problem solving skills, but it's just as important to know when and how to ask for help.
- **Be kind to yourself.** Remind yourself of your achievements and learn to give yourself a break. Think about what you have accomplished each day rather than what you haven't, and set realistic expectations for yourself.
- **Increase your social support network and nurture existing relationships.** Surround yourself with considerate people who make you feel safe and supported.
- **Learn to say no.** It's common to commit to too many social or professional activities. Try to be honest with yourself about what's reasonable without pushing yourself over the edge.
- **Focus on things you can change rather than things you can't.** Let go of the things you have no control over.

Can you think for a few moments about which of these practices you use most often? Are there some that you would like to start using?

Resilience is a skill – like bike riding or running – that can be learned AND improved with practice.

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FIB 1: As a veteran partner...

Every session of HomeFront Strong will include a FIB (Fill In the Blank) worksheet that asks you to share your thoughts and feelings about your experiences as a veteran partner. Your answers are completely private, confidential, and for your use only.

What is your story as a veteran partner?

We all have a story we tell ourselves – a running dialogue inside our head. Think about the story you tell yourself about the most challenging parts of being a veteran partner. What were – or are – some of the hardest moments for you and your family?

This conversation with yourself is very important - please try to complete every question.

When I think about Michaell's time in the military, my first thoughts are...

[   ]

When I think about Michaell's time in the military, I feel...

[   ]

When I think about Michaell's time in the military, I am afraid...

[   ]

When I think about Michaell's time in the military, I want...

[   ]

Because of Michaell's time in the military, I can't...

[   ]

When I think about Michaell's time in the military, I am proud...

[   ]

When I think about Michaell's time in the military, I hope...

[   ]

When I think about my experiences with Michaell's time in the military, I am grateful...

[   ]

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The Power of Gratitude

Practicing Gratitude Can Increase Happiness by 25%!

Some people seem more happy and positive by nature. If that's you, congratulations! If your happy attitude could use a boost, practicing gratitude and optimism can help. These strategies have been linked to improved physical and mental health. Gratitude also helps build resilience during stressful situations.

What is Gratitude?

Gratitude is more than simply saying "thank-you" in response to an act of kindness or getting a gift. Gratitude is a shift in perspective to **purposely focus your attention on the good moments** of the day. For many of us, it's natural to focus on what went wrong in a situation. Unfortunately, paying attention to these daily hassles can increase feelings of stress and negativity. Gratitude, on the other hand, brings your attention to the good things in a moment.

Learning Gratitude

Many strategies help foster Gratitude. "What Went Well" or "Hunt the Good Stuff" are two common exercises that are drawn from work by Dr. Martin Seligman and the field of Positive Psychology. HomeFront Strong will teach you "What Went Well."

Research is very clear – regular Gratitude practice can help you:

- Focus on the positive things that happen each day
- Appreciate the good things that happen each day
- Build resilience during times of stress

The more you practice gratitude, the more natural it will feel to incorporate it into your daily life.

Focusing on gratitude has a remarkable impact on your mood and how you view the world.

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Grounding Strategy: Gratitude

Try to do this exercise **each night before going to sleep.**

Step 1: Think about **anything good** that happened to you today

Ask yourself **What Went Well?** It can be any moment from the day that was positive. It could be small...I woke up when my alarm clock first went off. Or it could be big...I got a promotion at work!

Step 2: Write down 3 positive things.

Step 3: Reflect on why each good thing happened. Determining "why" is an important part of the exercise.

For example, you might say...

- you woke up when your alarm first went off because you went to bed at a reasonable time last night
- you got a promotion because you've been working extra hours lately and you earned it

Try to include at least 3 things, even if you have to stretch for that third one. And try not to skip a night. If you do, come back to it the next night!

Consider the positive!

For more information about this activity and related content, see Dr. Martin Seligman's Learned Optimism (2006).

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Track Your Practice: Gratitude

Try to do this exercise each night before going to sleep.

Try to include at least 3 things, even if you have to stretch for that third one. And try not to skip a night. If you do, come back to it the next night!

What went well for you today? Reflect on why these things went well.

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Thank you for joining us for Session 1! We encourage you to practice gratitude throughout the next week. We will see you next time for Session 2: Manage Stress.

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Session 2: Manage Stress

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Session 2: Manage Stress

Welcome back to HomeFront Strong! In this session we are going to focus on managing stress. Let's get started.

Stress is normal

Stress is a natural part of life. When you are worried, your body releases hormones that help you cope. Your body recognizes that there is a threat, and prepares for either fight or flight.

If you were in physical danger, you would be able to survive by either fighting or fleeing. When the emergency ends, your body sends a signal to relax and return to its normal state. This type of stress is *acute*, meaning it is sudden and short-term — like a near-miss auto accident or an emergency medical situation.

A little stress can be a good thing

A fire alarm alerts you to avoid danger. A car horn can help you respond quicker to an urgent situation. A little stress can also energize you and help you perform better, such as having a deadline for a project or speaking before an audience.

Chronic stress builds up

Chronic stress occurs when you have repeated or ongoing stress, or when you feel like you cannot control the stress in your life. Your body does not have a chance to return to its normal, relaxed state. This kind of stress can affect your physical health, your mood, your performance at work, and your relationships.

Are you experiencing stress?

Here are some common indicators of stress.

- Muscle tension (pain in shoulders, neck, back, jaw, chest, etc.)
- Trouble concentrating, easily distracted
- Racing thoughts
- Strong emotions (crying, yelling, easily frustrated, or angry)
- Stomachaches
- Headaches or migraines
- Overwhelmed by day to day activities
- Easily agitated, irritable, or annoyed
- Eating too much or not enough
- Feeling fatigued throughout the day
- Restlessness or difficulty sleeping

Do any of these sound familiar?

The good news is that we can reduce our stress!

Session 2: Manage Stress

← → C 🔒 https://kees.miserver.it.umich.edu/main/Session2/FIB/153

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FIB 2: Stress and Veteran Life

Think about what you find stressful as a veteran partner and how you cope with this stress. Then take a moment to answer the following questions.

What has been the most stressful thing about Michaell's time in the military? What was one of the most difficult times ever?

What were your thoughts during that most stressful time? Pretend to be a sportscaster, doing a play-by-play listing of every thought you had about that situation... (list all of your thoughts)

That experience was so stressful because...

I tried different coping strategies for this, including...

I have hope that this situation will get better because...

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Stress Tracking

Let's look at patterns of stress. Over the next week, make a list of things that you find stressful. How would you rate your stress with each of those events? Do you notice any patterns in your stress?

| May 11, 2015 |
| May 12, 2015 |
| May 13, 2015 |
| May 14, 2015 |
| May 15, 2015 |
| May 16, 2015 |

Stressful Events	Stress rating
	-- ▾

Add Row   Save

| May 17, 2015 |

Grounding Strategy: Focused Breathing

Breathing is something we do all day, every day. But we rarely take the time to focus on it.

Breathing is a core Grounding strategy for HomeFront Strong. It is easy to do anytime, anyplace, and takes only a few minutes. Try to practice Breathing exercises every day.

Press the Play button to hear an audio file of our Breathing exercise. We invite you to do this exercise often, or to come up with your own Breathing practice.

► ●━━ 2:12 ◄)) ━●━━

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Session 2: Manage Stress

Track Your Practice: Breathing

You can improve your resiliency with Grounding techniques like deep breathing. Try to set aside time each day and each week for self-care strategies that lower your stress.

| May 11, 2015 |
| May 12, 2015 |
| May 13, 2015 |
| May 14, 2015 |
| May 15, 2015 |

Did you practice your breathing exercises?	Stress rating before practice	Stress rating after practice
○ Yes	[— ▼]	[— ▼]
○ No		

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| May 16, 2015 |
| May 17, 2015 |

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← → C 🔒 https://kees.miserver.it.umich.edu/main/Session2/TrackPracticeGratitude/2015-09-26

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Track Your Practice: Gratitude

Try to do this exercise each night before going to sleep.

Try to include at least 3 things, even if you have to stretch for that third one. And try not to skip a night. If you do, come back to it the next night!

What went well for you today? Reflect on why these things went well.

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Thank you for joining us for Session 2! We encourage you to practice breathing exercises, in addition to your daily gratitude practice. We will see you next time for Session 3: Cultivate Optimism.

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Session 3: Cultivate Optimism

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Session 3: Cultivate Optimism

Welcome back to HomeFront Strong! This session focuses on how to cope – in a positive way – with difficult situations. Let's get started.

Positive Coping

There are many ways to cope with stressful or challenging situations. For example:

- **Share with someone close.** Talking to a close friend can help release tension and give us a new perspective.
- **Use distraction.** Relax with a book, TV show, or movie. Listen to music. Spend time with family or friends. Do something pleasant that takes your mind off the stressful situation.
- **Get regular exercise.** Physical activity can reduce stress and turn negative energy into a positive activity. Get some fresh air by going for a walk or a jog.
- **Reframe negative thoughts.** Try to turn negative thoughts into more positive ones. You might discover that the way you are thinking about a situation is not helpful.
- **Practice grounding and relaxation techniques.** Meditation, mindfulness, visualization, progressive muscle relaxation, and deep breathing are great coping skills to use in stressful situations.
- **Take a break.** Give yourself a physical or mental time-out from a stressful situation. Instead, concentrate on things that are going well.
- **Write in a journal.** Writing can help you organize your thoughts and feelings, and can help you think more clearly about solutions.
- **Spend some time alone.** Give yourself time to think in a quiet space where you won't be disturbed.
- **Treat yourself.** Buy yourself a coffee or plan a weekend getaway. Doing something special for yourself can help you focus on good things.
- **Schedule your worries.** Sometimes it's hard to put a positive spin on stressful situations. Try setting aside a specific time and place to worry. This can help reduce anxiety. If you notice yourself thinking about worries throughout the day, try to let go of those thoughts until your scheduled worry time.
- **Let yourself laugh.** Laughter can improve your mood and help you feel relaxed.

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Coping Strategies

Below is a list of different kinds of coping strategies. For the next week, try doing something each day from the list below. Along with coping strategies that you already use, consider trying something on the list that you've never tried before.

Check the coping strategies that you'd like to use this week, and we'll save them in a list for you.

☐ Taking a shower or bath	☐ Alone time
☐ Venting or confiding in others	☑ Journaling
☐ Reading	☐ Deep breathing
☐ Listening to music	☐ Visualization
☐ Watching TV or a movie	☐ Progressive Muscle Relaxation
☐ Going for a long drive	☑ Mindfulness
☐ Going outside for fresh air	☐ Cleaning or organizing
☐ Playing board games or videogames	☐ Challenging negative thoughts
☐ Exercising	☐ Practicing mantras
☐ Going for a walk or a run	☑ Socializing with friends or family
☐ Meditation	☐ Finding comedic relief

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Your Coping Strategies

Here are the coping strategies you said you'd like to use this week:

- Write in a journal
- Practice mindfulness
- Socialize with friends or family

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Session 3: Cultivate Optimism

Thought Circles

We've gone over some different coping strategies to use when something is stressful or challenging. These strategies work because they help you change what you are thinking about. Once you start doing something else, your mind is less focused on your problem.

Our thoughts, our feelings, and our actions are all connected. The things we think about affect how we feel and what we do. If you are feeling upset, it is likely because of something that you are thinking.

What are your **thoughts?**

What is your **situation?**

What are your **feelings?**

What are your **actions?**

Here are some examples:

Think back to the first session of HomeFront Strong. You may have had mixed feelings about joining a program for veteran partners. Let's take a look at two different ways you may have felt. After you look at the thoughts, feelings, and actions for Scenario #1, read through Scenario #2 and see how they are different.

FIB 3: Veteran Life...Thoughts and Feelings

In this exercise, we will show you 4 examples of thoughts that other veteran partners have shared with us about their time in the military.

Each example has a negative and positive way of thinking. Please read the Thoughts, and fill in the blanks with a Feeling that could happen if you had that thought. And then, what might be some Actions that follow?

After you've gone through the 4 examples, you will see some blank pages where you can fill in your own examples.

Negative example (1 of 4)	Positive example (1 of 4)
Your situation...	**Your situation...**
As a veteran family,	As a veteran family,
Your thoughts might be...	**Your thoughts might be...**
Michaell will never be the same person after his time in the military.	Our family will be closer because of our experiences as a veteran family.
Your feelings might be...	**Your feelings might be...**
Your actions might be...	**Your actions might be...**

Negative example	Positive example
Your situation...	**Your situation...**
The first HomeFront Strong session	The first HomeFront Strong session
Your thoughts might be...	**Your thoughts might be...**
I'm not going to learn anything. No one understands what it's like to be a veteran partner.	This could be really helpful. I might learn something new.
Your feelings might be...	**Your feelings might be...**
I'm doubtful that this could be helpful for me.	I'm excited about what I'm going to learn in this session.
Your actions might be...	**Your actions might be...**
I'm not participating or paying attention to the material.	I'm going to practice the new strategies I learn.

As you can see, having different thoughts - even in the same situation - can influence your feelings and your actions.

What we think matters!

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Session 3: Cultivate Optimism

Grounding Strategy: Affirmations

Affirmations are positive statements that can help when you feel upset or trapped in negative thoughts. When you notice this happening, stop and repeat your affirmation instead of your negative thoughts. Different affirmations may work better for different situations.

The story we tell ourselves matters, and affirmations can help us shape that story.

Check the affirmations that you'd like to use this week, and we'll save them in a list for you. Practice using your affirmations throughout the day.

- This will pass
- I can do this
- Move on
- This won't last forever
- I'm getting through
- Be done
- Put one foot in front of the other
- Get through the day
- I'm where I'm supposed to be

- Dream, Hope, Believe
- Trust yourself
- Stop
- Next
- Keep on keeping on
- Tomorrow will come
- Breathe
- He'll be fine
- I'll be fine

What are 3 affirmations that have helped you with your experience as a veteran partner?

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Your Affirmations

Here are the affirmations you said you'd like to use this week:

- I can do this
- Keep on keeping on
- Breathe

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Track Your Practice: Gratitude

Try to do this exercise each night before going to sleep.

Try to include at least 3 things, even if you have to stretch for that third one. And try not to skip a night. If you do, come back to it the next night!

What went well for you today? Reflect on why these things went well.

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Thank you for joining us for Session 3! We encourage you to practice affirmations, mantras, and mottos, in addition to your daily gratitude practice. We will see you next time for Session 4: Rethink Thinking Part 1.

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Session 4: Rethink Thinking, Part 1

Session 4: Rethink Thinking 1

Welcome back to HomeFront Strong!

We have been talking about how the story we tell ourselves about veteran life matters. Sometimes this story starts to become negative. The 3 D's are strategies to help us rethink our negative thinking: **Dispute, Discover,** and **Distract.** In this session we'll focus on the first 2 D's: Dispute and Discover.

Dispute

Dispute is just what it sounds like – dispute your negative beliefs. Challenge those thoughts; prove your negative-self wrong! You can't always control the first thought that comes into your head but you can control the second thought and what you do with that thought.

When using Dispute to test your negative thoughts, ask yourself these questions:

- Is that really true? How likely is that?
- Is there any evidence for that thought?
- Is this really important? Am I blowing this out of proportion?
- Am I exaggerating or generalizing? You can often spot this when you use "always" and "never" in your thoughts.
- How useful are my beliefs? Are they working for me? Would I benefit more from different beliefs?

Let's Practice Dispute

Let's look at an example. Imagine you are on the phone with Michael and he suddenly hangs up on you. You might have some thoughts about this...and they might not be positive! In the example below, talk yourself through how you might Dispute those negative thoughts.

Your thoughts... *He's angry at me again. Every day! I can't do anything right. I don't even know why I try.*

Ask yourself....	Your answer?
Is this really true?	
How likely is this?	
What's the evidence for this?	
Is this really important?	
Am I catastrophizing or blowing this out of proportion?	
Am I exaggerating?	
How useful are my beliefs?	
Is this working for me?	
Would I benefit from a different belief?	

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Discover...What's Another Perspective?

Optical illusions are common. The images below show that your perspective – the way you view things – can change what you see. In our next skill, Discover, we want to focus on ways to change your perspective.

My Wife and My Mother-in-Law, by William Ely Hill. Wikimedia

Rubin Vase, by John Smithson. Wikimedia

Mooney Face, Wikimedia

Duck-Rabbit, by J. Jastrow, Wikimedia

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Discover

In Discover, we begin to consider other perspectives. What are other possible explanations? Why else might this person have acted this way? What else could be going on?

The key to Discover is considering other possible explanations by asking yourself:

- What are other explanations? What else might be happening? Make a list of all the possibilities – even the unlikely ones.
- Are there situational explanations? What else is going on around the other person? Often we underestimate the influence of the situation and environment.
- At the same time, we often overestimate our own influence. Ask yourself, "Is this really about me?" and "What might be going on for the other person right now?" Sometimes it's better not to assume that it is all about us.
- It could be something specific to the other person's personality, their style, their life, and stressors. Try to put yourself in the other person's position.
- Talk to someone else close to you - perhaps they can help you see another side of the story.

Let's Practice Discover

To practice Discover, let's return to our example from earlier – you are on the phone with Michaell and he hangs up on you. If those same negative thoughts occur, how might you apply Discover?

Your thoughts... *He's angry at me again. Every day! I can't do anything right. I don't even know why I try.*

Ask yourself....	Your answer?
What's another explanation?	
What else might be happening?	
What else is going on with the other person?	
Is this really about me?	

Session 4: Rethink Thinking, Part 1

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- Discover
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FIB 4: Dispute and Discover

Think about a very stressful experience you've had as a veteran partner. In the box below, type in a negative thought you have about that experience.

Now, let's work to change that negative thought by answering these questions for Dispute and Discover.

Dispute

Ask yourself.....	Your answer?
Is this really true?	this is a better width :)
How likely is this?	
What's the evidence for this?	
Is this really important?	
Am I catastrophizing or blowing this out of proportion?	
Am I exaggerating?	
How useful are my beliefs?	
Is this working for me?	
Would I benefit from a different belief?	

Discover

Ask yourself.....	Your answer?
What's another explanation?	
What else might be happening?	
What else is going on with the other person?	
Is this really about me?	
What's the other person's perspective?	
What might another friend say to me about this?	

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Session 4: Rethink Thinking, Part 1

Grounding Strategy: Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)

For our grounding strategy this session, we'd like to teach you a relaxation technique called PMR. Progressive Muscle Relaxation is a relaxation technique that involves tensing and then relaxing your muscles. You will be asked to apply tension to specific muscle groups, and then to pay attention to how your body feels when you stop applying tension.

Press the Play button to begin the exercise.

12:53

With practice, you can learn how to really relax and lower your stress level.

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Track Your Practice: Progressive Muscle Relaxation

You can improve your resiliency by using Grounding techniques like Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR). Try to set aside time every day for activities that help lower your stress.

Use this space to track your practice of Progressive Muscle Relaxation. Note your stress level before and after doing PMR.

May 25, 2015
May 26, 2015
May 27, 2015

Did you practice PMR?	Stress rating before practice	Stress rating after practice
Yes		
No		

Add Row   Save

May 28, 2015
May 29, 2015
May 30, 2015
May 31, 2015

Track Your Practice: Gratitude

Try to do this exercise each night before going to sleep.

Try to include at least 3 things, even if you have to stretch for that third one. And try not to skip a night. If you do, come back to it the next night!

What went well for you today? Reflect on why these things went well.

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Thank you for joining us for Session 4! We encourage you to practice progressive muscle relaxation, in addition to your daily gratitude practice. We will see you next time for Session 5: Rethink Thinking Part 2.

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Rethink Thinking 2

Tips for Distraction

Try a New Way of Thinking

FIB 5: Thought Swapping ✎

Session 5: Rethink Thinking 2

Welcome back to HomeFront Strong!

Remember the 3 D's? In the last session we covered Dispute and Discover. Now we'll focus on the 3rd D: Distract.

Distract

Let's start with a quote from the Russian author Dostoevsky:

"Try to pose for yourself this task: not to think of a polar bear and you will see that the cursed thing will come to mind every minute."

Although it was written in 1863, this sentence still rings true today. When we try *not* to think about something, it seems like that's all we *can* think about! We may try to ignore unwanted thoughts, but a part of our mind can't stop thinking about them. So what can we do?

Sometimes, our strategies of Dispute and Discover work well for changing negative thoughts. Other times, we just need a break from thinking. It's at these times that we recommend the 3rd D: Distraction.

Distraction is anything you do to purposely get your mind off of what's bothering you. Purposeful distraction is not escaping or procrastinating. It is consciously using something else – another thought, activity, or sensation – to refocus your mind away from unhelpful thoughts. Distraction techniques provide a mental break from having to think. You can then choose a later time to return to your thoughts, when you are better able to use Dispute and Discovery strategies.

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Rethink Thinking 2

Tips for Distraction

Try a New Way of Thinking

FIB 5: Thought Swapping ✎

Grounding Strategy: Visualization ◀

Track Your Practice: Visualization ✎

Track Your Practice: Gratitude ✎

Tips for Distraction

Whatever distracts you – even temporarily – will allow your brain to break the cycle of negative thinking. Here are some ideas:

- Anything you enjoy
- Anything that keeps you busy
- Read a book, do a puzzle, or listen to music
- Exercise or take a walk
- Spend time with friends
- Start or complete a project
- Watch a TV show or movie
- Take care of a task or errand
- Actively play with children or pets

Sometimes distraction techniques serve a double purpose – cleaning the house means we checked something off of the "to do" list, or going for a walk means we exercised. These techniques get our mind off of negative thinking AND give us something to feel good about.

Let's Practice Distraction

Let's go back to our example from last time - you're on the phone with Michaell and he hangs up on you. If those same negative thoughts come up, how might you apply Distraction?

What are some ways you could distract yourself in this situation?

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Session 5: Rethink Thinking, Part 2

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Try a New Way of Thinking

Let's practice your new thinking strategies this week. If a negative situation comes up, use the **thought circle** to write down the thoughts, feelings, and actions that follow. Also, try to use **Dispute, Discover, and Distract** to counter those negative thoughts.

What are your **thoughts?**

What is your **situation?**

What are your **feelings?**

What are your **actions?**

Your situation...

Your thoughts might be...

Your feelings might be...

Your actions might be...

Dispute

Ask yourself....	Your answer?
Is this really true?	
How likely is this?	
What's the evidence for this?	
Is this really important?	
Am I catastrophizing or blowing this out of proportion?	
How useful are my beliefs?	
Is this working for me?	
Would I benefit from a different belief?	

Discover

Ask yourself....	Your answer?
What's another explanation?	
What else might be happening?	
Why else is going on with the other person?	
Is this really about me?	
What's the other person's perspective?	
What might another friend say to me about this?	

Distract

Ask yourself....	Your answer?
What can I do to distract myself?	

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  - Try a New Way of Thinking
  - FIB 5: Thought Swapping ✎
  - Grounding Strategy: Visualization ◀
  - Track Your Practice: Visualization ✎
  - Track Your Practice: Gratitude ✎

FIB 5: Thought Swapping

A key part of resiliency is to train your brain to swap out negative thoughts for thoughts that are positive or neutral.

Below is a sample of thoughts and feelings that you may have had at some point in your experience with veteran life. Please read through each example, and give an alternative thought. Some of these examples might not apply to you and your family. That's ok. Just give it a try. Imagine what an alternative thought might be for those examples too.

If you are thinking or feeling...	Instead you might think...
I am exhausted managing everything in our lives.	I am tired. But this part of my life isn't going to last forever.
I am anxious about so many things.	It is normal to be scared and anxious. I have lots of other feelings too.
If something can go wrong, it will.	And then I will fix it. I always have before. And I can again.
I am scared that something bad could happen to Michaell.	
I am angry about my experiences as a veteran partner.	
I feel really incompetent. I can't take care of anything.	
I am lonely without Michaell.	
Veteran life is so frustrating.	
I am stressed out.	

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Grounding Strategy: Visualization

Our grounding strategy this week is Visualization. Find a comfortable place for this activity, and press the Play button to begin.

▶ ●———————— 7:00 ◀)) ————

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Session 5: Rethink Thinking, Part 2

Track Your Practice: Visualization

You can improve your resiliency by using Grounding techniques like visualization. Try to set aside time every day for activities that help lower your stress.

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June 1, 2015
June 2, 2015
June 3, 2015

Did you practice Guided Imagery?	Stress rating before practice	Stress rating after practice
No		
Yes	5	2
○ Yes ○ No	[▼]	[▼]

Add Row   Save

June 4, 2015
June 5, 2015
June 6, 2015
June 7, 2015

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Track Your Practice: Gratitude

Try to do this exercise each night before going to sleep.

Try to include at least 3 things, even if you have to stretch for that third one. And try not to skip a night. If you do, come back to it the next night!

What went well for you today? Reflect on why these things went well.

Sept. 26, 2015   Gratitude Archive

1 [   ]
2 [   ]
3 [   ]

Add Row   Save

Thank you for joining us for Session 5! We encourage you to practice visualization, in addition to your daily gratitude practice. We will see you next time for Session 6: Build Community.

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Session 6: Build Community

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- Building a Strong Community
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- Managing Expectations
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Managing Expectations

Are your expectations being met?

As you look at your friendships and the types of support you want, you may notice that you have certain expectations of people in your life. Are your expectations being met? If yes, great! Thank that person and keep that relationship going strong!

If your expectations are *not* being met, are your expectations realistic? We are not asking if your expectations are fair, but whether they are realistic for that person. If you are often angry, frustrated, irritated, annoyed, sad, or disappointed with someone – your expectations probably aren't realistic for that person.

It is sad, and often unfair, when our expectations are not met. But some people are just not able or willing to live up to what we want or need. You might need to adjust your expectations to reduce your own disappointment and frustration.

When we revise our expectations, we are not giving that person permission to be negative or inconsistent. People are going to do what they do – regardless of what we expect of them. If you can accept that this is the most you are going to get, you will be saving yourself from disappointment and frustration.

Let's think about expectations

For these next questions, think about someone in your life who didn't live up to your expectations. For example:

- Someone who wasn't there for you or who didn't come through for you when you expected them to
- Someone who did something hurtful that you wouldn't have expected

What expectations did you have of this person?

[   ]

Were these expectations realistic? Was this person really capable of giving you what you wanted or needed? (Hint: If you have to ask yourself this question, unfortunately the answer is probably no.)

[   ]

How could you revise your expectations of this person?

[   ]

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- **BUILD COMMUNITY**
- Building a Strong Community
- FIB 6: Social Support and Deployment ✎

Grounding Strategy: Guided Imagery

Next we'd like to walk you through a Guided Imagery exercise. Guided imagery is a grounding technique that can help you manage stress and build resiliency.

To begin, move to a quiet room or space where you can be alone and will not be tempted by distractions. Then, press the Play button to begin.

▶ ○─────────────── 6:56 🔊 ━━━━━

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Session 6: Build Community

Track Your Practice: Guided Imagery

You can improve your resiliency by using Grounding techniques like Guided Imagery. Try to set aside time every day for activities that help lower your stress.

June 8, 2015

June 9, 2015

June 10, 2015

June 11, 2015

June 12, 2015

Did you practice Visualization?	Stress rating before practice	Stress rating after practice
○ Yes	[— ▼]	[— ▼]
○ No		

Add Row   Save

June 13, 2015

June 14, 2015

Track Your Practice: Gratitude

Try to do this exercise each night before going to sleep.

Try to include at least 3 things, even if you have to stretch for that third one. And try not to skip a night. If you do, come back to it the next night!

What went well for you today? Reflect on why these things went well.

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Thank you for joining us for Session 6! We encourage you to practice guided imagery, in addition to your daily gratitude practice. We will see you next time for Session 7: Allow Emotions.

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Session 7: Allow Emotions

Session 7: Allow Emotions

Welcome back to HomeFront Strong! This session is about focusing on your emotions

Building Positive Experiences

When life gets busy or stressful, we often skip the fun things we really enjoy. NOW is the time to increase your positive experiences!

For the next week, try doing something each day from the list below. Along with activities that you already do, consider trying something on the list that you've never tried before

Check the activities that you'd like to do this week, and we'll save them in a list for you. Have fun!

- ☐ Go for a walk or jog
- ☑ Spend time outdoors
- ☑ Sit in the sun
- ☐ Read a book or magazine
- ☐ Go out to lunch or dinner
- ☐ See a movie
- ☐ Watch a TV show
- ☐ Plan a vacation or weekend getaway
- ☐ Find an organization where you can volunteer
- ☐ Organize your house
- ☐ Browse the internet
- ☐ Read or write a blog
- ☐ Write in a journal
- ☑ Reach out to friends or family members you don't see enough
- ☐ Practice meditation or yoga
- ☐ Go to the beach
- ☐ Go skiing

Sidebar navigation: HomeFront Strong; Session 1: Foster Resilience; Session 2: Manage Stress; Session 3: Cultivate Optimism; Session 4: Rethink Thinking 1; Session 5: Rethink Thinking 2; Session 6: Build Community; Session 7: Allow Emotions; **Allow Emotions**; Your Positive Experiences; Allow Emotions; FIB 7: Observe, Experience, Allow; Mindfulness in Daily Life

Your Positive Experiences

Here's what you said you'd like to do to build your positive experiences this week. Use this list as a reminder to do something fun every day!

- Spend time outdoors
- Sit in the sun
- Reach out to friends or family members you don't see enough

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Session 7: Allow Emotions

Allow Emotions

Your Positive Experiences

Allow Emotions

FIB 7: Observe, Experience, Allow ✎

Mindfulness in Daily Life

Allow Emotions

Your feelings are real and valid. Earlier in HomeFront Strong, we talked about how we can't stop our thoughts. The same is true for feelings - we can't stop or change them. Resilient people find a way to cope with their feelings.

HomeFront Strong has a strategy for managing strong feelings: Observe, Experience, and Allow. It takes time and practice to learn this new strategy and to make it a habit. As with all skills, the more you practice, the easier it will be for you!

Whenever you find yourself in a situation with strong feelings, keep these 3 steps in mind:

1. **OBSERVE**
   - Notice you are having a feeling.
   - Step back. Take a breath.
   - What are you feeling? Put the feeling into words in your head.
   - I have the feeling of _____.

2. **EXPERIENCE**
   - Let yourself feel.
   - Watch the feeling come and go, like a cloud moving through the sky.
   - Try not to block emotion. Don't push it away.
   - At the same time, don't hold on to it. And don't make it bigger than it is.

3. **ALLOW**
   - It is there.
   - You are not your emotion.
   - You don't have to act on these feelings.
   - Remember times when you have felt different, and know that you will feel better again.

Strategy adapted from work by Marsha Linehan

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Allow Emotions

FIB 7: Observe, Experience, Allow ✎

Mindfulness in Daily Life

Grounding Strategy: Mindfulness ◄)

Track Your Practice: Mindfulness ✎

Track Your Practice: Gratitude ✎

Session 8: Stay Strong

Track Your Practice: Gratitude

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FIB 7: Observe, Experience, Allow

For this FIB, think of something that happened this week where you felt some kind of negative emotion. Try to think of a situation that was not too challenging but still brought up negative feelings, like being cut off in traffic, waiting at a restaurant, losing your car keys, or feeling frustrated with a friend.

Answer the questions below using the steps to Observe, Experience, Allow:

What was the situation?

_____

Observe

What was your emotion or feeling in this situation?

_____

Thinking of your Stress Rating Scale, how intense was the emotion on a scale of 1-10?

[4   ▼]

Experience

Did anything feel good about this emotion? What did you like about having this emotion?

_____

Did you ignore your feelings? How did that make the situation better or worse?

_____

Were you able to pay attention to the emotion, without making it stronger? How so?

_____

Allow

Did you act on the emotion? If yes, what happened? If no, why not?

_____

Is this emotion permanent? Will you feel differently again?

_____

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Session 7: Allow Emotions

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Allow Emotions

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Mindfulness in Daily Life

The practice of mindfulness has been linked to greater resilience, and improved physical and mental health. Here are some suggestions for including mindfulness in your daily activities.

Sometimes it's hard to remain fully present and in the moment, and you may notice yourself being pulled into negative thoughts or feelings. That's ok – allow it to happen and gently return your mind to the present.

Mindful chores

Think about the routine tasks you do throughout the day, like washing dishes, doing laundry, or driving to work. When you do these activities, practice directing your attention fully to the task.

- When you wash dishes, notice how the water feels against your skin, the temperature, the sensation of soap bubbles. You may notice the sound of dishes clanking together or the rushing of the water from the faucet.
- When you might otherwise be thinking about things you need to do, or rehashing something from earlier in the day, see if you can be present with all of the sensations and experience the task directly at hand.

Mindful grooming

Think about all the grooming tasks you do each day (brushing your teeth and hair, washing your face and hands, showering/bathing, getting dressed and undressed). These activities usually happen at the beginning and end of the day, giving you the opportunity to practice mindfulness and be present as you get ready to start the day and again as you wind down. It may be helpful to start with one type of grooming activity to try mindfully and see what you notice day to day. Focus on the experience of these tasks.

- Feel the sensation of the toothbrush against your teeth or the comb stimulating your scalp.
- Hear the sound of the water splashing against your face.

Mindful listening to music

Music often serves as a backdrop to a variety of activities in our daily life. We may play music in the car, hear it in a store, or listen to it at home.

- When music is playing, see if you can bring your attention to the rhythm, the melody, and the words (if present).
- You may even practice noticing any emotions the music stirs while remaining present with the music itself.

Mindful conversations

When talking with others, try to be fully present for the conversation. You may drift toward other thoughts that aren't related to the conversation, but try to notice your mind wandering and bring yourself back.

- Listen completely when the other person is talking and be fully aware of what you are contributing to the conversation when you speak.

Mindful exercise or walking

When you move your body, you have an excellent opportunity to practice mindfulness. This can be during exercise or just while walking. Some people find it easier to be present with their bodies when they are moving, since the motion of their bodies can anchor them if their minds begin to wander.

- While walking, you can be aware of the rhythm of your walking motion, the feel of your feet making contact with the ground, the swinging of your arms, or the way you hold your shoulders as you move.
- When you exercise, you may also be able to notice feelings of physical stretching or straining.

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Grounding Strategy: Mindfulness

Now we're going to demonstrate a Mindfulness exercise to help you with this week's grounding strategy. For this activity, please choose a small piece of wrapped candy, but do not open the candy. Press the Play button to begin.

▶ ━━━━━━━━━━━━ 3:29 ◀) ━━━

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Session 7: Allow Emotions

Track Your Practice: Mindfulness

You can improve your resiliency with stress-reduction techniques like Mindfulness. Try to set aside time each day and each week for personal activities that lower your stress.

June 15, 2015

June 16, 2015

June 17, 2015

June 18, 2015

Did you practice Mindfulness?	Stress rating before practice	Stress rating after practice
Yes		
No		

Add Row   Save

June 19, 2015

June 20, 2015

June 21, 2015

Track Your Practice: Gratitude

Try to do this exercise each night before going to sleep.

Try to include at least 3 things, even if you have to stretch for that third one. And try not to skip a night. If you do, come back to it the next night!

What went well for you today? Reflect on why these things went well.

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Thank you for joining us for Session 7! We encourage you to practice mindfulness, in addition to your daily gratitude practice. We will see you next time for Session 8. Stay Strong.

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Session 7: Allow Emotions

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Session 8: Stay Strong

Welcome back to HomeFront Strong for our 8th and last session. This session focuses on how to stay strong using the tools you've learned through HomeFront Strong.

Overcoming Barriers

Barriers or challenges are common in life. Sometimes things can get in the way of our ability to "bounce back" from a challenge. The key to overcoming barriers is to identify what gets in the way of using the skills you have learned in HomeFront Strong. We'd like you to think about the following questions:

What are some of your personal barriers to bouncing back from a challenge?

How can you overcome these barriers?

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Tips for Overcoming Barriers

FIB 8: Stay Strong ✏

Mindfulness of the Senses

Grounding Strategy: Meditation ◀

Track Your Practice: Grounding Strategy ✏

Track Your Practice: Gratitude ✏

Track Your Practice: Gratitude

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Tips for Overcoming Barriers

Our HomeFront Strong house can be a reminder of the new tools you've learned, and can help you overcome barriers.

Foster Resilience

Remember that resilience can be improved with practice.

- Use your social support network and ask for help when you need it.
- Learn to let go of things you can't control.
- Remember your past successes when trying to overcome challenges.

Cultivate Optimism

Remember to look for What Went Well on a daily basis! Regular gratitude practice can:

- Help you focus on and appreciate the positive things that happen every day.
- Increase your resilience in stressful times.

Manage Stress

When things feel unmanageable, choose a positive coping strategy that works best for you.

- Keep in mind your "red flags" that are cues to your rising stress level.
- Remember to use the Stress Rating Scale to put your stress in perspective.

Rethink Thinking

Thoughts, feelings, and actions are all connected.

- Practice Disputing negative beliefs, Discovering other perspectives, and Distracting yourself from the cycle of negative thinking.
- If you notice yourself getting stuck, try repeating an affirmation that you believe in.

Build Community

In any situation, we all need different types of social support.

- What kind of support do you need? Emotional, Practical, Informational, or Companionship.
- Do you have any job openings? If so, try to be open to new experiences and ideas to build your social support network.

Session 8: Stay Strong

Allow Emotions

Feelings are real, true, and valid. Try practicing Observe, Experience, Allow when you have a negative feeling.

- Label the feeling, let yourself *feel* the feeling without making it bigger, and allow the feeling to exist.
- Remember that you will feel better again.

Practice Grounding

These grounding strategies help both your mind and body. Try them all and see what works best for you.

- Gratitude
- Breathing
- Affirmations, Mantras, and Mottos
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Visualization
- Guided Imagery
- Mindfulness

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FIB 8: Stay Strong ✎

FIB 8: Stay Strong

For this week's FIB, think about how far you've traveled since the beginning of HomeFront Strong. You've come a long way!

Think back to when you first started HomeFront Strong. What did you think the program was going to be like? How has it met your expectations?

What is the most important thing you got out of this program?

What are some skills you've learned?

How will you continue to use these skills?

What are you most proud of in yourself since HomeFront Strong started?

What does Resilience mean to you?

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Mindfulness of the Senses

Just like our daily routines, our senses help anchor us in the present. You may find it helpful to connect with your senses throughout the day.

- **Try to be present with your senses when you are feeling most overwhelmed.** This can help calm you and give you some distance or perspective.
- Your mind may wander and draw you into thoughts and emotions. You may notice that you are judging what you see, hear, smell, taste, or touch. Become aware of your thoughts and judgments, and notice them simply as part of the experience of your sensations. Don't be pulled in by them.

Vision

There are a variety of visual stimuli you may choose to focus on. For example:

- Simply notice whatever is around you at any moment.
- Become aware of the shape, colors, textures, and movement that you see.
- Notice the visual cues that signal the end of one object and the beginning of the next.
- Look for visual experiences that bring you pleasure: a beloved piece of art, element of nature, or the face of someone you love.
- Be present with the overall visual picture, as well as the small details you see.

Hearing

The world is full of sounds, some you may like (music), and some you may not (fire alarms). Practice being present with any and all noises in your environment, tuning into whatever sounds you hear.

- Also take note of silence and the sensations associated with it.
- Try practicing with specific sounds, like music, nature sounds, or bells.
- If there are sounds that you find soothing, you can listen to them on demand (e.g. recordings of favorite music or everyday sounds like a ticking clock).
- Practice being present even with unpleasant noises. You may find these sounds to be more tolerable when you allow them and explore them.
- Try to notice the distinction between the sounds themselves and your emotional reaction to them.

Touch

We are in constant contact with the physical world through our sense of touch, though we are not often aware of this contact. Our skin is the largest organ in the body. Through the sense of touch, we have the opportunity to be in the present moment at any time. Try noticing the way these things feel:

- Your clothes against your body
- Heat or cold (especially on very warm or cold days, noticing what the temperature feels like against your skin or deep in your core)
- Physical contact with others, like petting an animal, hugging, or shaking someone's hand
- Different textures (e.g. soft or coarse fabrics, blankets or clothing)
- The sensation of pressure due to movement (e.g. feet pressing against the ground while walking, fingers pressing against keys while typing on a keyboard)
- The pressure and feel of the body as it comes in contact with different things (e.g. sitting on a hard bench or laying on a soft mattress)

Taste

Taste is a key part of our daily experience. You can practice mindful awareness of taste by focusing on your meals and slowing down your eating to truly notice the taste of your food.

- Try to notice the variety of tastes even within a single type of food.
- Become aware of different tastes on different parts of your tongue.
- Try tasting things with strong flavors (e.g. sour lemon, bitter dark chocolate, salty pretzels, sweet maple syrup).
- See if you can eat slowly, truly tasting each bite, and focus your attention on your food without distractions. Try eating in a quiet space, without speaking or doing anything else during your meal.
- Savor each bite, treating it like a very delicious food you do not eat often. Notice how this feels, even for foods you do not enjoy.

Smell

We are often only aware of strong smells that are either pleasant or unpleasant. You can practice mindfulness through smell when you notice a particularly strong smell. Even if there isn't a strong scent, you can direct attention to your sense of smell and notice what is present.

- Become aware of any associations or memories a smell evokes. Perhaps the scent of cornbread baking reminds you of your grandmother. Notice these connections without being drawn into them.
- Try making a list of smells that make you feel good and use these at times when you may be struggling. Some people enjoy the smell of candles, lotions, flowers, or certain foods.

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Building Resilient Military Families

HomeFront Strong

Session 1: Foster Resilience

Session 2: Manage Stress

Session 3: Cultivate Optimism

Grounding Strategy: Meditation

Let's do a mindfulness exercise that focuses on your breathing. Take a moment to get into a comfortable position before you begin. Please click here for the exercise.

▶ ●━━━━━━━━━━ 6:01 🔊 ━━━━━

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Hi test | Edit my profile

HomeFront STRONG
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HomeFront Strong

Session 1: Foster Resilience

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Session 4: Rethink Thinking 1

Session 5: Rethink Thinking 2

Session 6: Build Community

Session 7: Allow Emotions

Session 8: Stay Strong

STAY STRONG

Track Your Practice: Grounding Strategy

You can improve your resiliency by using stress-reduction techniques like Deep Breathing, Progressive Muscle Relaxation, Gratitude, Affirmations, Visualization, Guided Imagery, or Mindfulness. Try to set aside time every day for activities that help lower your stress. Keep practicing!

June 22, 2015
June 23, 2015
June 24, 2015
June 25, 2015

What Grounding Strategy did you practice?

[   ]

Add Row   Save

June 26, 2015
June 27, 2015
June 28, 2015

Hi test | Edit my profile

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Track Your Practice: Gratitude

Try to do this exercise each night before going to sleep.

Try to include at least 3 things, even if you have to stretch for that third one. And try not to skip a night. If you do, come back to it the next night!

What went well for you today? Reflect on why these things went well.

Sept. 26, 2015   Gratitude Archive

1 [   ]
2 [   ]
3 [   ]

Add Row   Save

Congratulations on completing HomeFront Strong! We hope that you found the program helpful. We encourage you to keep using each of the new strategies from the House and to practice the grounding strategies that work best for you. Thank you for participating!
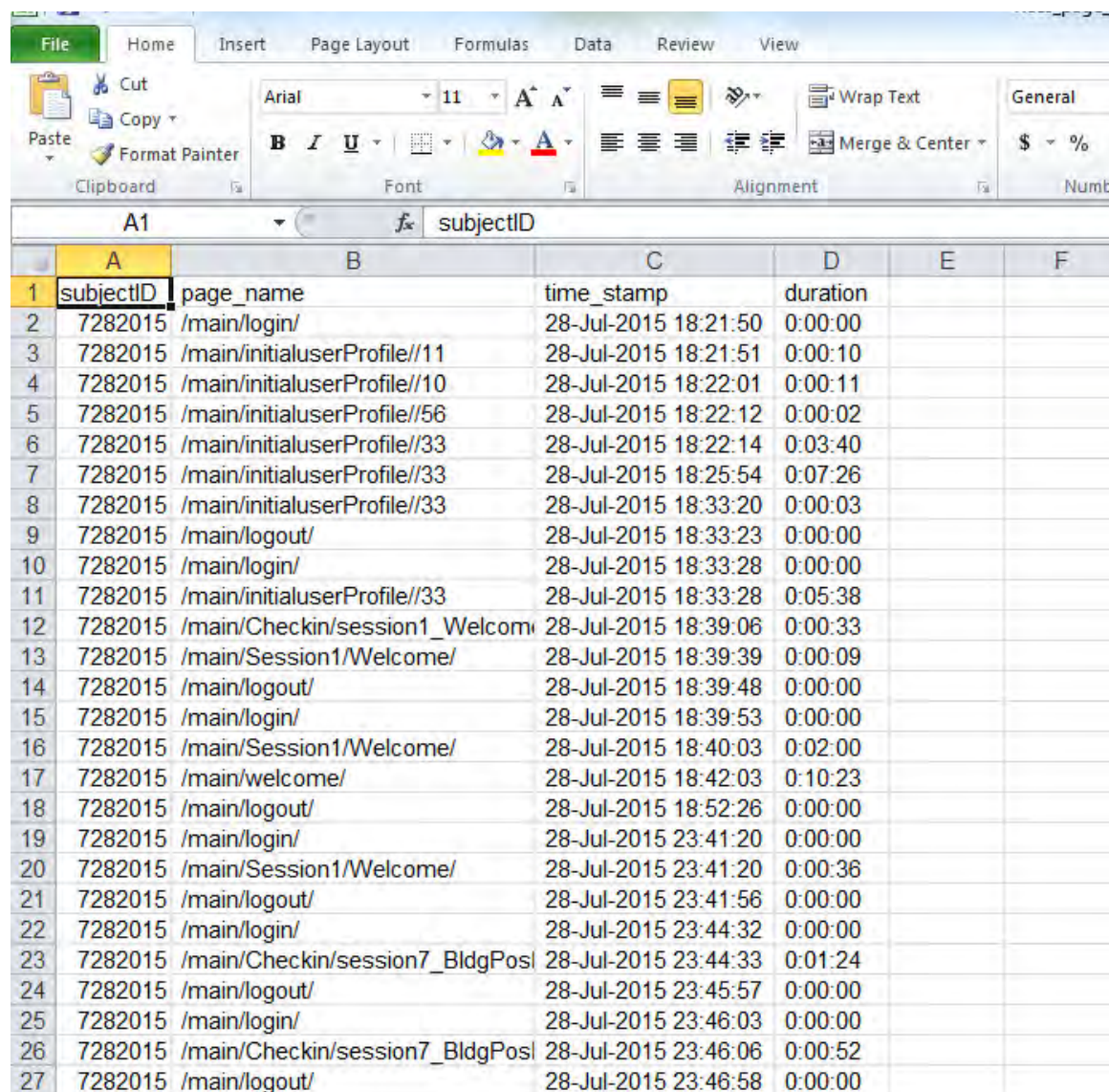
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C. Paradata Sample File

The file below is a screenshot from our internal pilot testing of the HFS mobile website and the paradata.

- Column A – Subject ID
- Column B – The website subpage that was clicked
- Column C – The time when the subpage was clicked
- Column D – The length of time the subpage was active

We are writing syntax to operationalize session dose and session completion based on length of time that subpages are active and numbers of clicks per session topics.

	A	B	C	D
1	subjectID	page_name	time_stamp	duration
2	7282015	/main/login/	28-Jul-2015 18:21:50	0:00:00
3	7282015	/main/initialuserProfile//11	28-Jul-2015 18:21:51	0:00:10
4	7282015	/main/initialuserProfile//10	28-Jul-2015 18:22:01	0:00:11
5	7282015	/main/initialuserProfile//56	28-Jul-2015 18:22:12	0:00:02
6	7282015	/main/initialuserProfile//33	28-Jul-2015 18:22:14	0:03:40
7	7282015	/main/initialuserProfile//33	28-Jul-2015 18:25:54	0:07:26
8	7282015	/main/initialuserProfile//33	28-Jul-2015 18:33:20	0:00:03
9	7282015	/main/logout/	28-Jul-2015 18:33:23	0:00:00
10	7282015	/main/login/	28-Jul-2015 18:33:28	0:00:00
11	7282015	/main/initialuserProfile//33	28-Jul-2015 18:33:28	0:05:38
12	7282015	/main/Checkin/session1_Welcome	28-Jul-2015 18:39:06	0:00:33
13	7282015	/main/Session1/Welcome/	28-Jul-2015 18:39:39	0:00:09
14	7282015	/main/logout/	28-Jul-2015 18:39:48	0:00:00
15	7282015	/main/login/	28-Jul-2015 18:39:53	0:00:00
16	7282015	/main/Session1/Welcome/	28-Jul-2015 18:40:03	0:02:00
17	7282015	/main/welcome/	28-Jul-2015 18:42:03	0:10:23
18	7282015	/main/logout/	28-Jul-2015 18:52:26	0:00:00
19	7282015	/main/login/	28-Jul-2015 23:41:20	0:00:00
20	7282015	/main/Session1/Welcome/	28-Jul-2015 23:41:20	0:00:36
21	7282015	/main/logout/	28-Jul-2015 23:41:56	0:00:00
22	7282015	/main/login/	28-Jul-2015 23:44:32	0:00:00
23	7282015	/main/Checkin/session7_BldgPos|	28-Jul-2015 23:44:33	0:01:24
24	7282015	/main/logout/	28-Jul-2015 23:45:57	0:00:00
25	7282015	/main/login/	28-Jul-2015 23:46:03	0:00:00
26	7282015	/main/Checkin/session7_BldgPos|	28-Jul-2015 23:46:06	0:00:52
27	7282015	/main/logout/	28-Jul-2015 23:46:58	0:00:00